

In search of agency: Following in the footsteps of Janusz Korczak. Part 2

Lectures and workshop in Notting Hill's Book & Kitchen.

These lectures and workshops are part of a project led by the **Fundacja Korczakowska** entitled '**Janusz Korczak in Europe Old and New**', financed by the **Erasmus+ Programme** and supported by the **Jewish Community in Warsaw**. The London activities are organised by the Fundacja Korczakowska in collaboration with the **Polish Cultural Institute in London** and **Book & Kitchen**.

LECTURES and WORKSHOPS

First day

Saturday 22 October, 10am-3.30pm

Second day

Sunday 23 October, 10am-3.30pm

Book & Kitchen
31 All Saints Rd
London W11 1HE

*Unintelligently we divide years
into less or more mature ones.
There is no such thing as
present immaturity, no hierarchy
of age, no higher and lower
grades of pain and joy, hopes
and disappointments.
When I play or talk with a child,
two equally mature moments —
mine and the child's —
have intermingled.*
Janusz Korczak
“The child's right to respect”



See some **movies** and **other materials** about Janusz Korczak in English on our website: <http://korczakowska.pl/en/documents/>

During our first meeting we presented our interpretation of Janusz Korczak's legacy. The most important conclusion is: Korczak built institutions based on the agency of their residents, children and adults. We illustrated our interpretation with examples from history, and from the perspective of the contemporary philosopher, the Nobel Prize Winner, Amartya Sen.

During the workshops we provided opportunities to our participants to exercise their own agency, especially their agency in the personal relationships and in the relationships with the people they live or work with.

Our current meeting is a continuation of these previous activities; however we invite also new participants who were not with us for our previous meeting to join us.

The aim of our activities is to explore the practical conclusions that can be drawn from Janusz Korczak's legacy. He devised extremely effective ways to help the most disregarded people of his time: Jewish and Polish orphans. At his unusual orphanage, Korczak and his colleagues treated the children not as objects but as human beings. The children were given the right to make decisions about their own individual lives, as well as decisions affecting their community as a whole. Gradually they learned independence and how to be responsible for others, and this helped them to overcome their exclusion from society.

During the meetings, the participants will find out how Korczak's ideas and practical solutions can still be applied today, not only to help children but other marginalized people too. The participants will also discover the most important features of Korczak's approach, and will be able to experience it at first hand.

The meetings are designed primarily for those who work with children and other marginalized people in a professional capacity, and for anyone who is interested in Korczak's work.

PROGRAMME DETAILS

Saturday 22 October

10am-12pm: Three lectures will be given as an introduction to the workshops being held the same and following day.

10-10.40am: *The Korczak Effect* by Wojciech Lasota

10.40-11.20: *Janusz Korczak's pedagogical postulates in practice* by Julia Dmeńska

6:15-7:15pm: *In Search of Self-governance* by Bartosz Pielniński PhD

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

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12.15pm-3.30pm (including breaks)

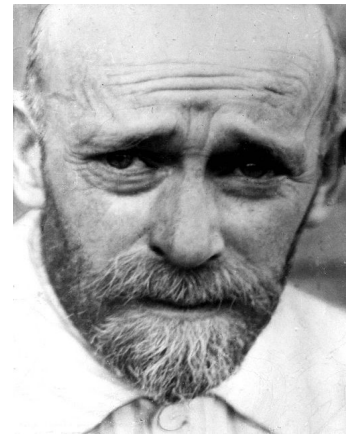
The beginning of the workshop *In Search of Agency: Following in the Footsteps of Janusz Korczak. Part 2.*

Workshop leaders: Julia Dmeńska, Wojciech Lasota, Bartosz Pieliński.

Sunday 23 October

10am-3.30pm Continuation of the workshops *In Search of Agency: Following in the Footsteps of Janusz Korczak. Part 2.*

Workshop leaders: Julia Dmeńska, Wojciech Lasota, Bartosz Pieliński.



Goal of the lectures

The Korczak Effect by Wojciech Lasota explores one perspective of Korczak's legacy as a long-term social experiment whose implications extend more widely beyond the strictly pedagogical area, to many fields working with people.

Janusz Korczak's pedagogical postulates in practice by Julia Dmeńska is the story of her experiences of working with children and groups of mothers from the Korczakian perspective, showing how Janusz Korczak's legacy could be appropriate today.

In Search of Self-governance by Bartosz Pieliński PhD gives an opportunity to see Korczak's institutions in the light of the modern social sciences, with particular reference to the surveys and ideas of the political economist Elinor Ostrom, winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics.

Goal of the workshop

The first goal is to provide our participants with the opportunity to experience and practice at first-hand the ways in which we can think and act today about the possibilities of building institutions, such as Korczakian institutions, based on agency. The second goal is to bring together the experiences and feedback of the participants.

The course of the workshop

Our two workshops contain six steps regarding agency. We took the first three steps during our previous meetings and they were: "My Agency", "Me and You. Agency in the relationships", "He/She. The agency of the people we work with.". Our main conclusion from this workshop is: to be aware that the people who deserve respect for their agency do not know that they have their agency; and that they can express it, and that they have the right to needs and expectations connected with their agency. That is why people who work with people who don't know this, can be their voice and demand respect for their agency, firstly from themselves.

The current workshop consists of the next three steps: "Agency in the group", "Agency in the institution" and "Institution based on the agency".

"Agency in the group" exercise: people experience their agency during team-work and ask themselves: Is being in the group an opportunity to exercise their agency, or to lose it?

"Agency in the institution" exercise: we usually reconstruct the way of functioning of the Korczakian Orphan's Home as a model institution based on agency. We try to understand how the so-called "Korczak Effect" was possible. We practise using categories proposed during Wojciech Lasota's lecture: Clarity, Transparency, Responsibility, Freedom.

"Institution based on the agency" exercise: we design a fictional institution, trying to base it on the model of the Korczakian institution, i.e., basing it on individual agency.

Janusz Korczak was born **Henryk Goldszmit** in 1878 or 1879 in Warsaw, and died in 1942 at the Treblinka concentration camp. He was a Jewish-Polish paediatrician, educator, writer, journalist and social activist. He developed a highly original way of working with children, especially with those who were marginalized by their poverty or social status. His main achievement was the foundation of the Orphans' Home – an orphanage largely run by the children who lived there. The way in which Korczak worked with children is the starting point for the Korczak Foundation's interpretation of his legacy. The aim of the Foundation is to show that "Korczak's method" can be applied not only in working with children, but in almost any institutional context.

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Our Goal:

To share our knowledge and interpretations, transposing Korczak's wisdom into contemporary practice in many fields

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Our team

Wojciech Lasota - chairman of the Korczak Foundation, currently a trainer in soft skills, associated with the Development Office at the University of Warsaw and Ernst & Young Foundation (Poland). He is a former employee of the Documentation and Research Centre KORCZAKIANUM, which is a department of the Museum of Warsaw. He has also worked as a theatre educator, art historian, copywriter and education officer (for more than a decade at the Royal Castle in Warsaw). As a Foundation member, he participated in a presentation about Korczak entitled "Reformator Świata" ("Reformer of the World") for the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He has given numerous lectures on Korczak and led many Korczak-related workshops, for Polish and German teachers, students and children, among others.

Bartosz Pieliński - Vice-chairman of the Korczak Foundation. He is a lecturer and researcher at the Institute of Social Policy of the University of Warsaw. His field of research covers non-governmental organizations, social economy, and various forms of collaboration. As a Foundation member, he tries to use his research experience in practice. He regards Janusz Korczak as a visionary who created institutions based on self-government.

Julia Dmeńska - an associate of the Korczak Foundation, she is an expert on education, organizer of social and cultural activities with extensive experience of working with children and young people. Among other activities, she has worked with the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland and the Center for Civic Education. For four years she ran socio-therapeutic workshops for young people.

Magdalena Kołodziejczyk – an associate of the Korczak Foundation, she is an expert on education, an organizer of social and cultural activities and a trainer in soft skills. She also works with the School for Leaders and the Ocalenie Foundation. She has wide experience in coordinating projects on leadership and management.

Agnieszka Witkowska-Krych - anthropologist of culture, Hebraist, sociologist, graduate of Interdepartmental Individual Studies of Humanities, currently Ph.D. student in the Institute of Polish Culture at the University of Warsaw, museum curator in the Center of Documentation and Research Korczakianum (Museum of Warsaw), researcher of the life and legacy of Janusz Korczak and the history of Warsaw Jews. Lover of cats, bonsai trees, watercolor painting and cross stitching. Cooperates with the Foundation Forum for the Dialogue, Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Center for Yiddish Culture and Korczak Foundation.

Fundacja Korczakowska

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